

AP English Language and Composition Students,

AP English Language and Composition, as a year-long course, is unlike many high school English classes in terms of the texts and content assigned to students. Whereas most secondary school English curricula revolves around literature, the AP English Language and Composition will focus on non-fiction, and the arguments and rhetoric employed within the genre.

During the course of this summer, students planning to enroll in AP English Language and Composition will encounter one of the United States' most canonical works of non-fiction. Before the school year begins, students will be asked to read and annotate Henry David Thoreau's *Walden*. The link to purchase the book can be found [here](#), or pasted below as well.

To quote the College Board's website: "The AP English Language and Composition course focuses on the development and revision of evidence-based analytic and argumentative writing, the rhetorical analysis of nonfiction texts, and the decisions writers make as they compose and revise." In our first unit of the year, students will examine "the rhetorical situation" of a text - and learn and discuss all of the factors that allow that text to enact and enforce an argument.

With this in mind, after reading and annotating Henry David Thoreau's *Walden*, students should write three separate paragraphs where they respond to the following prompts that are related to the rhetorical situation:

1. What do you believe to be the exigence of the work? In other words, what has compelled Thoreau to write *Walden*?
2. Who was Thoreau's audience? To whom is this author speaking?
3. What is Thoreau's purpose with this work? What effect does the author hope to have on his audience?

Please elaborate and expand on your thoughts within each of these three paragraphs - and don't be afraid to quote directly from the text.

After writing these three paragraphs, students should write a fourth and final response that is more personal in nature. I ask that students write me a personal letter (one to three paragraphs max) where they answer the following question: How did this text affect you? Do you agree or believe in Thoreau's words? Why or why not?

Please note that students should maintain a digital copy of their written work so it is available to turn in online (via the Canvas student portal) the first day of class. You will also need to bring your annotated book.

Link to *Walden*: <https://www.amazon.com/Walden-Henry-David-Thoreau/dp/1494812509>

Besides reading *Walden*, I also ask that students of AP English Language and Composition read two additional books: One work of fiction and one work of nonfiction. After reading the work of non-fiction, students must write a one-page reflection, citing three moments from the story from which they found particularly impactful.

Fiction:

Over the summer, please read *Gilded Mountain* by Kate Manning. When we gather for class in September, the first unit of the year will cover the genre of the American short story. We will read a variety of diverse authors who, through their works of fiction, make wildly different statements about the United States. Kate Manning's recent novel tells a story local to us in Carbondale, and although fiction, the narrative is based on the Crystal River Valley. Please read this novel and be prepared to write about it and discuss it in class on the first day of school. As you read, think about how this novel uses our local area to make a broader statement about American society.

If *Gilded Mountain* does not seem interesting to you, you may read *Klara and the Sun* by Kazuo Ishiguro instead.

Nonfiction - students can choose ONE text from the list below:

In Cold Blood by Truman Capote

Red: Passion and Patience in the Desert by Terry Tempest Williams

The Emerald Mile by Kevin Fedarko

Roughhouse Friday by Jaed Coffin

After reading the work of non-fiction, students must write a one-page reflection, citing three moments from the story from which they found particularly impactful.